

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

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Michigan United Conservation Clubs Testimony on House Bill 4610

To: Chairman Joel Sheltroun and members of the House Committee on Tourism,
Outdoor Recreation & Natural Resources

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Committee Members.

On the behalf of the sportsmen and women of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some of MUCC's concerns with House Bill 4610.

Today MUCC is here on the behalf of our members – the hunters, anglers and trappers of Michigan – to protect the right and ability of sportsmen and women to recreate in public lands that were purchased with or managed by federal and state hunting and fishing dollars. MUCC is not against pack and saddle users – we support all forms of recreation to the extent that they do not conflict with hunting, fishing, or trapping. We believe that a system of designated trails and routes, such as we have for ORVs and snowmobiles, is a fundamental way to curb natural resource damage and avoid user conflicts on public lands. However, when we placed an inquiry to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to give us an analysis of how this bill would impact sportsmen, the answer we received was frightening. Michigan simply cannot afford forfeiting federal Pittman-Roberson and Dingell-Johnson funding to the tune of roughly \$25 million per year, nor is MUCC willing to stand down against a proposal which diverts the dollars of Michigan sportsmen to other states.

Secondly, as a statewide organization representing various diverse interests in the sporting community, MUCC is concerned about the precedent of enacting broad sweeping, statewide legislative proposals that will have significant impacts on very local, sensitive management plans, even though those impacts may be unintended. For the many diverse recreational lands the state manages under its jurisdiction, local or regional management concepts and plans have been formed by local user groups and biologists to direct local solutions and purposes of use. These plans have been and should continue to be bolstered by ample public input and strengthened by scientific review. MUCC believes in the process of land management on a case-by-case basis and these plans should not be pre-empted by broad statewide legislative proposals. Today we have Mr. Dave Smethurst, an active and well-respected member of the Pigeon River Country State Forest Advisory Council to speak more specifically to an example of the effect HB 4610 would have on local land use management.

Thank you for your time.